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ABSTRACT

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The objective of this project was to discover an effective means by which teachers could have available sufficient data to make decisions in order to preplan individual teaching-learning situations. In order to achieve this objective, an electronic information retrieval system was developed. Behavioral objectives, subject-matter statements, suggested instructional procedures, materials and references, and an evaluation procedure were written and each item was assigned an identifying number and symbol. A screen of learner characteristics and professional variables was then used to choose those items which would be the most suitable for each student working on a given topic with a specific teacher. The system was refined through a continuous feedback system. A reference list is provided. Appendices contain the lists of learner variables, professional decision-raking variables, and supplemental information about the coding system used. (JY)

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THE COMPUTER AS A TOOL FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT

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THE COMPUTER AS A TOOL FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT

J. E. Eisele

Problem

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The project reported in this paper addressed itself to the problem of using the computer to help classroom teachers preplan an individual-ized program of instruction. Teachers are, after all, expected to provide a curriculum which is relevant to the learner, important to society, appropriate in terms of learning theory, and of significance to the various disciplines. A monumental task, at least, and one with which teachers have received little help in the past.

In order to investigate possibilities in this area we posed questions which were central to the problem. Namely, we sought answers to the following:

- 1. What processes are employed by the expert classroom teacher in making decisions about individual teaching learning situations?
- 2. What variables must be considered in making decisions about teaching and learning plans?
- 3. Can the computer be used to augment the decision making powers of the classroom teacher?

The job of the teacher seems clear in some respects. He is expected to provide learning opportunities for each student which are in keeping with the needs of the individual. He must select these opportunities either from his own experiences or from these in combination with other data sources. And the individual programs must account for a host of variables which at present are hypothesized to be related to the learning process. Examples of these variables would be learning rate, learning styles, interests, cognitive stages, and sex.



Another expectation of the teacher is that the individualized curriculum is significant in terms of the discipline and is organized for optimum learning conditions. This adds considerably to the complexity of the decision-making function of the teacher. In all, the operations necessary to satisfy the requirements mentioned, and countless more could no doubt be added, are sufficient to stagger the imagination. To get a rough quantitative estimate of the proportion of the task, consider only the number of behavioral objectives which would need to be written for such a program. Eisner has estimated as many as 4,200 per year. This has been questioned as a bit too high, but Sullivan's estimate of 9-12 objectives for six or seven classes per day is still immense.

Objectives

The objective of this project was to discover an effective means by which teachers could have available sufficient data to make decisions in order to preplan individual teaching-learning situations. More specifically, we sought to determine the kinds of decisions teachers must make to preplan an individual teaching-learning situation, what variables they must consider in the process, and what the outcome of the decision-making should be.

Next we hoped to be able to conceptualize the teaching-learning process in order to provide a framework upon which a model could be developed.

Finally, it was our intention to apply automated procedures to the system either in whole or in part.

Any system we were to develop had to support the functions of the classroom teacher, save him time, and assist him with the more routine. decision-making functions. In addition, it was felt that the system



should ultimately allow teachers to improve the quality of their decisions to permit more effective learning. It had to be, in brief, a self-renewing system.

Definitions

Before going any further into a discussion of our procedures, it seems prudent to define some terms as we employ them. Hopefully, these will not differ significantly from common usage.

We view the curriculum as the planned experiences designed to enable learners to achieve the goals of the school. Stated slightly differently, the term curriculum refers to all the teaching-learning situations planned for providing learners with experiences which will encourage the development and practice of behaviors which the school is interested in fostering.

Looking at curriculum in this light, we view instruction as the actual employment of the planned procedures or the development of the teaching-learning situations with the students. Management, then, can be used to refer to the techniques by which the teaching-learning situations, and their essential components, are organized for maximum utility. But, what are the essential components of the teaching-learning situation.

In terms of managing a teaching-learning situation we think only of those elements which are essential to the process and which are common to all teaching-learning situations. Again, nothing is original about our definition, many authors have adopted similar paradigms³. The components, then, are the instructional objectives, subject matter, activities or procedures, materials, and evaluation. Each of these components has been dealt with extensively in the literature.



Procedures

The initial procedure in the development of the computer retrieval system was, of course, to specify the exact desired objectives for the system. To do this, the project staff differentiated between the desired functions of the teacher and those of the computer in terms of decisions which must be made in order to preplan a series of teaching-learning situations. The following breakdown has been reported by Harnack⁴.

The teacher's functions were four in number:

- 1. To identify the subject of the teaching unit and the basic unifying theme which would serve as the center of interest in the classroom during a specific period of time.
- 2. To define the student's abilities, needs, characteristics, and interests, as these items relate to the selections to be made within the total unit.
- 3. To suggest possible learning ratcomes in the form of behavioral skills, understandings, information, and peripheral objectives which may reasonably be expected to result from the teaching-learning situations developed throughout the unit.
- 4. To make, if deemed necessary, certain professional decisions related to those tasks or areas which the teacher deems important for the objectives and the students in the classroom.

On the other hand, the electronic computer had to satisfy the following functions:

- 1. To provide the teacher with a subject-matter outline or problem census related to the learning outcomes identified by the teacher.
- 2. To suggest a significant (related to the learning outcomes and characteristics of the pupils) number of large-group introductory and development activities.
- 3. To suggest a significant number of introductory and developmental small-proup activities.



- 4. To suggest a significant number of individual learning activities which might prove to be helpful.
- 5. To suggest suitable instructional materials, including reference materials, for individual students.
- 6. To suggest appropriate equipment, audiovisual materials, and the like, for large-group and small-group instruction.
- 7. To suggest suitable references and other materials for the use of the teacher.
- 8. To suggest how achievement of these proposed outcomes may be evaluated
- 9. To suggest 'leads' to other related units (continuous activities) which might grow out of the proposed unit.

The teaching model around which the program was built can be roughly summarized here. According to this model, the teacher first determines an area of interest around which several related teaching-learning situations can be developed. He then selects or identifies the specific behavioral objectives, related to the topic, which the learners can reasonably be expected to achieve <u>based upon their needs</u>. From some reservoir of ideas, then, the teacher selects items related to objectives held in common to all for large-group instruction. These items include the subject-matter, materials, procedures, and evaluative criteria. The screen for selection of these items in this case being the selected objective. There is no reason why if the criterion for selection (the objective) is known, the related items cannot be stored and retrieved when the objective is called for.

The next step in the model is to identify the characteristics of individual learners which should serve as screens in selecting items related to an objective for a specific learner. Given an objective, for example, for which several items of instruction are appropriate, the



teacher will select those which are most suitable for a specific individual.

To take a common illustration of the kind of screen I am talking about, of several books related to a given objective the teacher would select the ones which the learner could read or which matches his reading level.

Programs were written which employed the objectives and variables called learner characteristics as screens. A complete breakdown of these variables is not possible here but is included in the appendix of this paper. A third screen was also developed to permit teachers to exercise their judgement in selecting items which were in keeping with factors relevant to special knowledge about teaching, such as methods of instruction, types of objectives, and types or kinds of instructional materials. These we called professional decision-making variables, and they are also listed in the appendix of this paper.

To operationalize the system, we first wrote items for each component within the framework of units which were commonly taught in elementary school or high school. Behavioral objectives, subject-matter broken into short statements or in outline form, suggested instructional procedures materials and references, and evaluation procedures were written. Each item is assigned an identifying numeral and symbol. For example, OB 17 refers to objective number 17, and SM 34 refers to the item of subject-matter numbered 34. Each item of subject-matter, instructional activity, material and evaluation device is then "coded" by specifying the numerals of the objectives to which each relates. For example MA 13-2,7,44 means that material number 13 is appropriate for objectives numbered 2, 7, and 44 in the unit. Incidentally, topics are also assigned identifying numerals.



Each item, including the objectives, are than coded to the learner and professional variables by indicating the variable number to which the item relates. For example, OB 17-143 means that objective number 17 has been classified as a knowledge objective according to the <u>Taxonomy</u>. At present there are a total of 260 variables to which an item could be related.

To use the system the teacher selects the desired objectives from a listing for the topic requested. The teacher also completes a profile sheet on each learner. The computer then provides four sets of suggestions for each objective chosen. The suggestions consist, again, of subjectmatter, materials activities, and evaluation. The first set of suggestions, labeled Part A in the diagram in Appendix III, lists the suggestions for each objective for the individual learner with his name appearing at the beginning of the listing. Part C provides a list of all the activities and materials suggested in the unit. Part D contains suggestions for small-group activities where some objectives are common to only a few students. The combined sets of suggestions are called Resource Guides.

There is no prescribed method for using a Guide. Some suggestions are provided, however, and most users follow a similar procedure. They must first do some further preplanning from the suggestions provided. This requires the organization of the suggestions into weekly, daily, and periodic plans, and the times in which learners will work independently. To do this, the teacher might begin by selecting objectives for large and small group instruction from the Guide. A form is provided for specifying these plans according to the objective and day. Several



days and/or objectives may be planned at one time. Also on this form the teacher may identify the days and times to be set aside for individual work on the unit. At this same time, the teacher begins preplanning the individual work. Another form is provided on which can be indicated the activities and materials for as many objectives as the teacher wishes to specify in advance. In some cases, preplanning for an individual pupil may involve a single objective at a time. In other cases, the student may experience longer-range planning and may be expected to organize his time for long periods. This form may be attached to the individual printout and used for record-keeping purposes.

As soon as face-to-face interaction between teacher and pupils begins, it is desirable to involve the learner in as much planning as possible. Of course, they have probably already been involved in the selection of objectives and other preliminary planning. At this point, they can profitably be involved in finalizing their individual and group plans with frequent opportunities for revision as they proceed through the unit.

The system is refined through a continuous source of feedback. The data bank is stored on magnetic tape and a matching tape collects feedback information about the items in a unit. Periodically, according to volume of use, the feedback tape provides data which indicates appropriate alterations to the unit. Changes are made in the master tape to either add to, delete, or alter items as confirming data is received from various sources which will be referred to later.

It must be remembered that the total system is based upon considered, and not experimentally tested, hypotheses. They are not, however, in testable



form as will be indicated in another paper. Rather than disregarding untested procedures, this system provides a framework for their examination. The results of the experimentation is one valuable source of feedback classroom teachers who use the system are another. Many valuable suggestions come from these users.

Implications

The possibilities of this system seem unlimited. Some of the more salient ones are worth mentioning at this point.

First I should mention the time factor. This system can save countless hours of preplanning. However, this economy is really mythical. Ideally, the system makes many decisions of selection and matching which the teacher no longer has to do. There is reason to doubt that teachers ever made all these decisions, but if they did, and we believe they should, much time would be saved.

Next I would point to the tremendous value of the data bank. Altogether, we now have over five thousand objectives and they are "Taxonomized" and coded to a large number of other variables. In addition, we have countless items of subject-matter, instructional procedures, materials, and evaluation devices also coded to the variables and related to the behavioral objectives. Furthermore, these are all related to instructional topics, the importance of which many of us have forgotten. Herrick⁵, long ago, reminded us that:

Perhaps the most critical and central concept related to the teaching operations is the idea of the organizing center. As 'the point where all the important aspects of the teaching act can be related and given focus,' its effect on the quality of instruction cannot be denied.



Another implication must deal with the whole concept of individualizing instruction. To vary instructional plans for a single objective requires tremendous knowledge and resources which most teachers simply do not have available. To also vary the objectives for individual students is almost more than anyone should expect of a teacher. This system can help by providing much of the necessary data for planning such an individualized program. We are not far away from having a pupil data file which will keep records on both learner characteristics and achievements. That way the file can be useful to both assist in the selection of objectives and as a screen for selecting individual programs of instruction.

Finally, let me allude again to the research framework of the system. We view all combinations of a Resource Guide as researchable hypotheses.

Does treatment X result in condition Y and, if so, under what conditions?

Does sex, age, etc. have any bearing on instructional decisions for specific objectives? The whole question of sequence and scope are researchable within this framework. Another paper will deal with this topic, but its significance bears this repetition.

Conclusion

The system which I have described has been used successfully to assist classroom teachers in individualizing instruction. It has demonstrated to us that some, although certainly not all, of the decision making processes of the classroom teacher can be augmented with electronic data processing equipment. Further, we are satisfied that such augmentation enables the teacher to consider many variables when preplanning individual programs which could not be considered without such assistance.



Many questions remain to be answered. Ultimately, the system must be judged in terms of learning outcomes and we are constantly seeking data along this line. Also, however, we must judge its effectiveness in terms of making curriculum and instruction more functional, assuming equal achievement on the part of learners. We are also gathering data in this direction and are most optimistic about the assistance which teachers are receiving from the system. We must continue to investigate the nature of the teaching-learning process and the kinds of processes necessary to preplan units of instruction. An especially challenging and interesting area of research in connection with the system is the relevance of learners' characteristics to teaching and learning. We are only beginning to touch upon these variables.

In conclusion, while recognizing many of the limitations of the system and while we continue to seek better approaches, we believe this project contributes much to a concern which has been described by Goodlad:

If individualizing instruction is to become more than a slogan, data to guide diagnosis, information on the consequences of decisions, and data to facilitate reassessment are essential. The quantities and varieties of data to be stored and retrieved, to say nothing of the manipulations of these data to be performed. defy human capabilities. We are now beginning to envision for the teacher a highly professional role of diagnosing and prescribing for the learner. But this role may never be fulfilled unless the computer is brought meaningfully and productively into these sensitive, often intuitive acts, as supplier of essential data and as predictor of certain possible consequences of choice. As yet this fertile soil has been scarcely gazed upon.



References

- 1. W. James Popham, et.al. <u>Instructional Objectives</u>. Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1969, p. 14.
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- 3. See especially Ralph Tyler, <u>Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction</u>. Chicago: <u>University of Chicago Press</u>, 1950; <u>Hilda Taba</u>, <u>Curriculum Development</u>, <u>Theory and Practice</u>. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1962.
- 4. Robert S. Harnack, "Resource Units and The Computer," The High School Journal. December, 1967, p. 127-128.
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 Los Angeles, California, January, 1965.



LEARNER VARIABLES

Student's Name		Teacher's Name				
		_	Unit Title			
OBJ	JECTIVES					
GEN	IERAL INTEREST					
1	Philosophy	2	Darrahalam			
3	Logic	4	Psychology Morals			
5	Religion	6	Political Science			
7	Economics	8	Law			
9	Education	10	Commerce			
11	Everyday Experiences	12	Folklore			
13 15	Language	14	Astronomy			
17	Chemistry Mathematics	16	Earth Science			
19	Anthropology	18 20	Physics Rielegies Coiones			
21	Engineering	22	Biological Science Agriculture			
23	Domestic Science	24	Other Places			
25	Animals	26	Famous People			
27	Natural Phenomenon	28	Creating and Construction			
29	Fine Arts	30	Photography			
31	Biography or Autobiography	32	Drama			
33	Fiction	34	Poetry			
35 37	ocography	36	History			
39	Sports/Leisure Physical Science	38	Social Science			
41	Humanities	40 42	Natural Science Music			
43	Art	42 44	Creative Writing			
45	Adventure	46	Non-Fiction			
47	Early Days	48	Modern Wonders			
49	Old Tales	50	Fun			
51	Automobiles	52	Transportation			
occ	UPATIONAL INTERESTS					
F 4	T- 3	, mar				
53	Industry	54	Communication.s			
55 57	Transportation	56	Homemaking/Home Nursing/Child Care			
57 59	Food/Agriculture Business (Office	58	Finance			
61	Business/Office Recreation/Travel	60 63	Sales/Marketing			
63	Construction	62 64	Service Arts and Entertainment			
65	Science/Research	VT	Arts and Entertainment			
SOC	SOCIAL CLASS					
66	Lower/Lower	£ 77	Ilmon /I access			
68	Lower/Middle	67 69	Upper/Lower Upper/Middle			
7 0	Lower/Upper		Upper/Upper			



T.	F.A	RN	F:R	VA	RT	ΔI	٦Ť.	FS
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Student's Name

SEX

72 Male

73 Female

DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS

- 74 Learning Physical Skills Necessary for Ordinary Games
- 75 Building Wholesome Attitudes Toward Oneself as a Growing Organism
- 76 Learning to Get Along with Age-Mates
- 77 Learning an Appropriate Masculine or Feminine Social Role
- 78 Developing Fundamental Skills in Reading, Writing and Calculating
- 79 Developing Concepts Necessary for Everyday Living
- 80 Developing Conscience, Morality, and a System of Values
- 81 Achieving Personal Independence
- 82 Developing Attitudes Toward Social Groups and Institutions
- 83 Accepting New and More Mature Relations with Age-Mates of Both Sexes
- 84 Accepting One's Physique (Male and Female Role)
- 85 Achieving Emotional Independence from Parents and Other Adults
- 86 Achieving Assurances of Economic Independence
- 87 Selecting and Preparing for an Occupation
- 88 Developing Intellectual Skills and Concepts Necessary for Civic Competence
- 89 Desiring and Achieving Socially Responsible Behavior
- 90 Preparing for Marriage and Family Life
- 91 Acquiring A Set of Values and Ethical System as a Guide to Behavior

READING LEVEL

103	Non-Reader	104	Pre-Primer
105	Primer	106	1
107	1.5	108	2
109	2.5	110	3
111	4	112	5
113	6	114	7
115	8	116	9
117	10	118	11
129	12	120	Above 12

MENTAL AGE

194	.5	1.95	1.0
196	1.5	197	2.0
198	2.5	199	3.0
200	3.5	201	4.0
202	5.0	203	6.0
204	7.0	205	8.0
206		207	10.0
208	11.0	209	12.0
	13.0	211	14.0
	15.0	213	16.0
214	17.0	215	18.0
216	19.0	217	20.0
218	Above 20		



LEARNER VARIABLES	Student's Name
CHRONOLOGICAL AGE	
219 0.5	220 1.0
221 1 5	222 2.0
223 2.5	224 3.0
225 4.0	226 5.0
227 6.0	228 7.0
229 8.0	230 9.0
231 10.0	232 11.0
233 12.0	234 13.0
235 14.0 237 16.0	236 15.0
239 18.0	238 17.0
241 20.0	240 19.0
271 20.0	242 21.0
PHYSICAL HANDICAPS	
243 Blind	Old Part 12 Of the
245 Deaf	244 Partially Sighted
247 Gross Motor Disability	246 Hard of Hearing
	248 Fine Motor Disability
RESIDENTIAL STATUS	
252 Residential	253 Non-Residential
BODY AREA	
OFH Ward NY 1 CO	
254 Head, Neck, Shoulders	255 Arms
256 Trunk, Lungs	257 Legs, Feet
TEADNING PARTEDOMESTS	
LEARNING ENVIRONMENT	
258 Classroom	259 Outdoors
260 Gymnasium	



PROFESSIONAL DECISION MAKING VARIABLES

Teacher's Name			Unit Title				
OBJI	ECTIVES						

~							
MAJO	OR SOCIAL FUNCTION						
92	6	93	Communicating				
94		95					
96		97					
98	Cooperating	99					
	Earning a Living	101	Educating				
102	Spiritual/Moral						
INSI	RUCTIONAL ACTIVITY		•				
101	Manalan A						
	Teacher Activity		Dramatization				
	Verbal	124					
	Problem Solving Field Trips	126					
	Listening	128 130					
131		130	-F6				
133	6, 00000	134					
135	Lecture	136	J				
	Student Led Discussion	138					
01100							
SUGG	ESTED APPROACH						
139	Introductory Activity	140	Developmental Activity				
141		142					
			and a carried motivity				
OBJE	CTIVES						
143	Knowledge	144	Comprehension				
145	Application	146	<u> </u>				
147		148	J = -				
149	•	150					
151		152					
153	Characterization by a Value	154	Psychomotor				
MATE	RIAL DESCRIPTOR						
155	Audio	156	Visual				
157			Verbal				
159	Non-Verbal	160					
161 163	Programmed Instruction Resource/Places/People	162	3-D Material/Laboratory				
	reported LTGGS/LGODT6						



PROFESSIONAL DECISION MAKING VARIABLES

MATERIALS

164	Eooks	165	Vertical File Material
166	Films		Film Strips
168	Resource People		Resource Places
	Charts		Maps
172	Black Board Design		Bulletin Board Design Materials
	Opaque Projector Materials		Overhead Projector
	Sponsored Materials		Programmed Materials
	Tapes		Records
180	Slides	181	Art Materials

INSTRUCTIONAL GROUPING

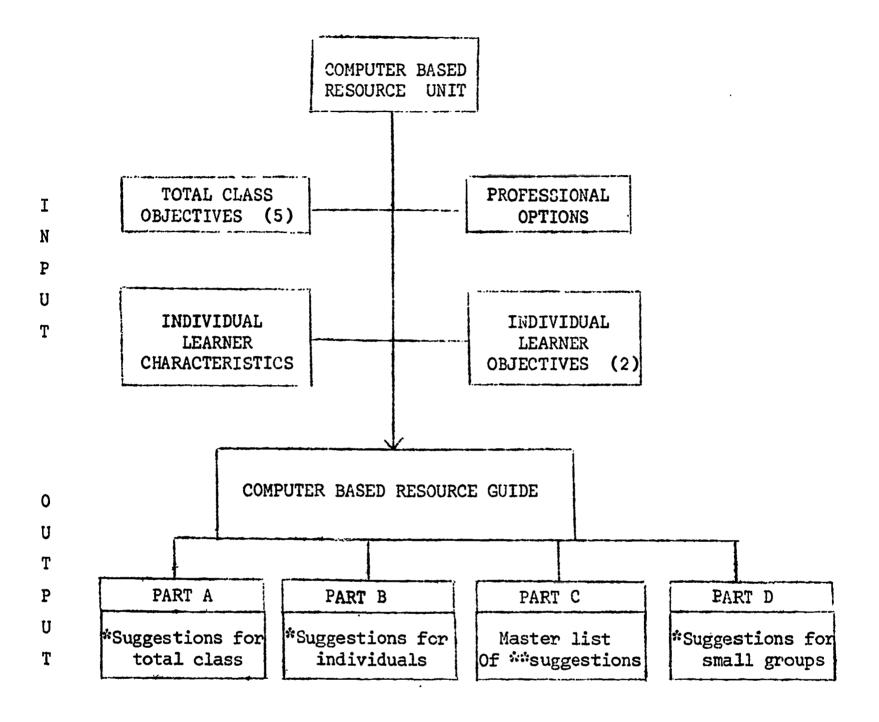
182	Student Activities (individual)183	Small	Group	Activity
184	Large Group Activity		or oup	

EVALUATION DEVICES

187 189 191	Standardized Test Paper/Pencil Objectives Checklist Self-Evaluation	188 1 90	Paper/Pencil Essay Rating Scale Log Diary Creating and/or Construction
	Selective Observation	132	creating and/or construction



Diagram of CBRU Schema



A Computer-Based Resource Unit consists of thousands of suggestions* for instructional strategies. Each of the suggestions is "coded" to the objectives in that particular unit as well as appropriate learner characteristics and professional variables. This coding acts as a screening device so that a classroom teacher will receive only those suggestions relevant to her particular students and situation.

* Suggestions include: Objectives, content outline, activities, instructional materials, and measuring devices.

**Suggestions: Part C contains only content and materials



CODING FORMAT

OBJECTIVES STORED IN FILE

DESCRIPTORS OF LEARNER CHARACTERISTICS

PROFESSIONAL DECISION VARIABLES

PROFESSIONAL DECISION VARIABLES

Objectives chosen by teacher

Subject matter

Activities

Materials

Evaluation

Appendix IV